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There are many branches of the church in which the only real diaconal service is done by women. The restoration of the order of deaconesses should be accompanied by a thorough reform of the diaconate.

## CHURCH UNION THAT UNITES

### II

## THE HOME MISSIONS COUNCIL

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*In the April number of the BIBLICAL WORLD we published under the above caption, "Church Union That Unites," an account of the work of the Co-operative Council of City Missions in the city of Chicago, and gave a plan of federating churches now in operation in Oregon. The present article by Dr. Barnes is a succinct presentation of the work that is being done in a wider sphere by the great denominations. All of these facts are gratifying evidence that Protestantism is really facing the great task of co-operating for the spread of Christianity.*

The minds of many people adjust more readily to close interdenominational co-operation abroad than at home. It is comparatively easy to take a detached point of view and look with judicial composure upon the tendency of our workers in Asia to sink denominational ambitions under the large aims of the whole kingdom of Christ. We are likely to cheer them for doing in united college and other work what we should not think of undertaking in the region where we live.

Correspondingly we are more eager to have the work of denominational competition stopped in a distant part of our own country than we are to stop it in our town. New Englanders who give largely for missions in the West can easily insist that there should not be too

many churches aided in any one place "out there," but how about having our denomination resign its place in our own village? On the other hand, in the West they say, "'The Interdenominational Commission of Maine' may be just the thing down East, but that sort of thing won't work out here." Furthermore, the home mission field is the zone of possible expansion in denominational territory and power, it is the tract of keenest sensitiveness.

Hence to secure actual co-operation in home missions is the greatest achievement of the kingdom of God. To grapple a problem of this magnitude, nearness, and delicacy, with any hope of success, took men of large mold, fine feeling, and firm grasp. Such men were given for the hour, when in 1908 Dr.

Charles L. Thompson, of the Presbyterian (U.S.A.) Home Board, and Dr. Henry L. Morehouse, of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, along with others of like mind, organized the Home Missions Council. It was not an academic performance, but an actual undertaking in practical polity.

Instead of being baffled by the stupendous difficulties and retiring after the first flush of enthusiasm, the council has steadily gained in strength and efficiency. It is now composed of thirty-three societies and boards connected with twenty-one distinct denominations. It embodies nine-tenths of the nationally organized home mission forces. Its voting members are all the officials and the members of the official boards whose scope of responsibility is coextensive with that of the organization they represent. The directory of constituent organizations contains 153 names of such officials. When the members of the boards are added, this number must be multiplied by ten or twenty. It has an executive committee of fifteen.

A quick view of the actual working of the organization can be obtained through the concise report of the Executive Committee at the last annual meeting of the Council:

The principal events of the year were:

First: Correspondence and interviews with officials of the general government relating to Order No. 601, issued by Commissioner Valentine, touching the matter of ecclesiastical garb in government Indian schools. The report of the Indian Committee will give a full statement of the work done by the council in this matter and the conclusion reached.

Second: Another matter occupying a good deal of time of the Executive Com-

mittee was the conduct, jointly with the Council of Women for Home Missions, of the observance of Home Mission Week, November 17-24, 1912. The executive secretary of the joint committee of the two councils will make full report of the large success attending upon these efforts, and it is hoped that some plans may be devised by the council for the continuation in some form in years to come of the Home Mission Week. Specific recommendations will be made later during the sessions of the council.

Third: Reports from the states in which the Neglected Fields Survey was undertaken show that practical benefits of a large sort have accrued from that attempt to make co-operation and federation effective. It is hoped that follow-up plans will be developed in the respective states by which the work may be carried on to increasing effectiveness.

Other matters which have been considered during the year are: survey of rural fields; co-operative work among Spanish-speaking people in the United States; work among the freedmen; the subject of social service.

The work of the Porto Rican missions: progress has been made there toward co-operative effort, of which full report will be made by the appropriate committee.

The Executive Committee is happy to report that the finances are in fairly good shape, a relatively small balance of eighteen hundred dollars (\$1,800) only being brought over to the budget of the new year. [The expenditures of the year were less than twenty thousand dollars (\$19,554.40), although at first it had been estimated that Home Mission Week alone would cost twice that.]

The council is to be congratulated on the standing it has secured among all the co-operating denominations and of the recognition, general and widespread, of its effectiveness as an organization for co-ordinating the home mission work of our country.

A further glimpse of the wide scope of the council and its detail of practical responsibility can be gained by noting the fact that it has nine standing committees and six special committees. It is alive in many directions. This year special emphasis is being laid on the home mission work for foreign-speaking people. Through its Neglected Fields Survey Committee, its Committee on Immigration, and other lines of urgent action, the Home Missions Council can be depended upon to do everything in the power of a general advisory body to promote co-operation in place of com-

petition. Throughout this democratic land of ours, in the actual issue everything depends on the growth of co-operative sentiment on the widespread field itself.

Taken all in all, is there any more hopeful sign on the horizon of the kingdom of heaven on earth at the present hour than the sign of the cross which is being borne by this new Simon of Cyrene following the Master? The agency may not be a conspicuous figure on the ultimate pages of history, but it bears the emblem of vital, sacrificial, continental victories.

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## THE NORTH DAKOTA PLAN OF BIBLE STUDY

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The American Sunday school stands charged with failure; and its most enthusiastic admirers cannot say that there is nothing in the charge. It has elaborate machinery; it enlists the earnest endeavors of numbers of sincere, devoted people; but somehow, it does not secure results commensurate with the effort put forth. Nowhere is this failure more conspicuous than in the case of boys and girls of high-school age. Primary methods and kindergarten devices usually catch and hold the interest of the little ones; but as the children approach the adolescent period there is evident a falling-off in interest and, consequently, in attend-

ance. Boys especially come to feel that they are "too big" to go to Sunday school. They drift out into the current of life unattached in any way to the church, and without any adequate knowledge of the Book which has had more influence than any other upon our civilization, but which by a curious anomaly is not taught in the schools.

The causes for this unfortunate state of affairs do not seem difficult to find. There is, of course, the general restlessness and irresponsibility of youth which make it difficult to keep boys of this age in any kind of school. But besides all this there are various specific causes. In the first place, the teaching is gen-